

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 MCT-01 SSO-00 INRE-00

NSCE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

/066 W

-----211940Z 027936 /47

O R 211915Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 858

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

AMEMBASSY BANGUI

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 8275

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, CF, FR

SUBJ: FURTHER QUAI COMMENT ON CONGO

REF: PARIS 8179

1. THE QUAI HAS LEARNED THAT NGOUABI'S ASSASSIN, KIKADIDI, IS A BAS-CONGOLAIS AND THAT HE WAS AN INTELLIGENCE OFFICER FOR MASSEMBA-DEBAT, ACCORDING TO DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR AFRICA CHRISTIAN DE LA ROCHERE. THE CONGOLESE NOW CLAIM THAT HE WAS INVOLVED IN PREVIOUS PLOTS (WITHOUT EXPLAINING WHY HE HAD NOT BEEN ARRESTED) AND THAT HIS ASSASSINATION SQUAD INCLUDED FOUR OTHERS, TWO OF WHOM WERE SHOT, WHILE THE OTHER TWO FLED WITH KIKADIDI.

2. THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR WAS RECEIVED AT NOON MARCH 19, BY THE MILITARY COMMITTEE. PM GOMA, WHO IS A MEMBER OF THE ELEVEN-MAN GROUP, SIMPLY READ OUT THE ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT THE
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KILLING, INCLUDING REFERENCE TO THE "IMPERIALISTS AT BAY" BEHIND THE PLOT. HE SAID NOTHING ABOUT CONGOLESE RELATIONS WITH FRANCE. LATER THAT DAY, THE AMBASSADOR DELIVERED GISCARD'S CONDOLENCE MESSAGE. THE FRENCH ARE MOMENTARILY REASSURED, LA ROCHERE REMARKED, BECAUSE FRANCE HAS NOT BEEN ACCUSED DIRECTLY BY THE CONGOLESE AND NO FRENCHMAN IS INVOLVED. MOREOVER, THE SITUATION IN BRAZZA IS CALM AND THERE APPARENTLY WERE NO

OTHER INCIDENTS AROUND THE COUNTRY, EARLY RUMORS ABOUT TROUBLES IN POINTE NOIRE NOTWITHSTANDING. THE QUAI NOW IS WONDERING HOW TO HANDLE FRENCH REPRESENTATION AT NGOUABI'S FUNERAL SERVICE SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 2, ASSUMING THAT RELATIONS WILL BE SUCH THAT FRENCH REPRESENTATION IS DESIRED.

3. LA ROCHERE SAID THAT ONLY LAST WEEK, NGOUABI AGREED TO VISIT PARIS IN LATE APRIL TO SETTLE THE CONTENTIEUX OVER THE FRENCH OIL AND PHOSPHATE COMPANIES. IN FACT, THE FRENCH HAD NOTED A MORE ACCOMMODATING ATTITUDE IN NGOUABI RECENTLY AND HAD PLACED SOME CREDENCE IN REPORTS OF HIS "DISAPPOINTMENT" WITH COMMUNIST COUNTRIES AND THEIR AID. A TENTATIVE AGREEMENT WITH ELF-ERAP, DESCRIBED AS "HARD BUT NOT ABSURD" WAS ALSO ENTERED INTO LAST WEEK. GIVEN THIS EVOLUTION, THE QUAI FEARS THAT NGOUABI'S DEPARTURE MAY BE A SETBACK FOR FRANCO-CONGOLESE RELATIONS. THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR IN BRAZZA REMAINS VERY PRUDENT, HOWEVER, AND HAS NOT EXPRESSED AN OPINION ON THE DIRECTION THE NEW GOVERNING GROUP IS LIKELY TO TAKE. GAMMON

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